

***Session: Middle East
Founding Constitution***

November 21, 2005

Name of Organization

This name hereafter for this organization is *Session: Middle East*.

Purpose

As all people have different ideologies, creeds, cultures, and traditions, conflict at any point is inevitable. However, this conflict can be solved diplomatically. In our current world, where conflict seems to be never-ending, this is often a lost concept. *Session: Middle East* is an organization designed to engage young people to tackle conflicts in non-violent and diplomatic ways. Our region of focus is the Middle East, but the methods are universal. The Activities section shows how *Session: Middle East* plans to meet this objective in five key ways.

Activities

- 1) Run an annual intercollegiate competition to give college students an experiential environment to directly practice diplomacy in Arab-Israeli conflict resolution.
- 2) Attend intercollegiate forums and competitions on the region such as Model Arab League. This will allow the organization to interact with other colleges who show interest in the Middle East, and hopefully through our achievements at these conferences, our organization will obtain more credibility and prestige to the organization nation-wide to attract more colleges to our annual forum.
- 3) Bring experts in political science, international affairs, and the natural and applied sciences to analyze the situation either from on the ground or academically and invite students to also share their research and ideas.
- 4) Discuss current events and role play key officials involved to better analyze the difficulties that must be overcome due to the situation. Furthermore, knowing the role and perspective the official involved must maintain, students will try to predict or determine how they would react in the same situation.
- 5) Serve as a conduit and resource for Arab, Jewish, and Muslim student groups to find common exchanges that promote peace-building and promising interactions for future cooperation.

These five objectives help this organization discuss conflict resolution in the Middle East diplomatically, ethically, and without hostility. At the same time, it allows students to see how current political theory and history is applied to political situation on-the-ground and at real-time. Such activities allow students the opportunity, often a sobering one, to place themselves in a perspective that they may not agree with or share.

Membership Requirements

There are no criteria to join *Session: Middle East*. In fact, this organization will not be successful without a diverse, enthusiastic, and motivated group of members. Anyone with scientific, journalistic, or political interest in the Middle East is especially encouraged to join. However, due to the history of the region, the current events and

theories discussed often involve third parties, such as Europe, Russia, and the United States, that are outside of the region. This organization's policies are clear and adherent to those mandated by the Student Organization Resource Center (SORC) at the University of Pittsburgh; **no hazing or illegal discrimination will be used as a condition of membership in the organization.**

Membership Requirements

There are no financial requirements for membership. The only times financial commitments may be needed are for those seeking to attend Model Arab League conference and other intercollegiate conferences this organization attends so as to cover travel, room and board, and incidentals.

Associate Membership

Faculty, staff, alumni, and non-University persons are also encouraged to become associate members. Such members will be critical to present academic research currently in the field and representing the organization in the local western Pennsylvania community as well as their local communities. This organization strictly adheres to the policies of SORC regarding such members; **faculty, staff, and alumni of the University and non-University persons may participate in the meetings and activities of the organization but may not vote, hold office, or serve in formal leadership positions.** It is important to note that graduate students are not mentioned in this statement. Graduate students can participate if the members unanimously agree to allow them as members. They can help with the forum as well as university-wide events the organization runs. However, they will not have voting rights as this organization is designed to be undergraduate-initiated and run.

Membership Procedures

Session: Middle East is a student organization that will actively recruit students during the entire school year, mainly through members with activities such as "Bring a Friend Day". In this way, members can bring their friends and colleagues to the organization whom they feel will benefit from the organization and will also contribute positively to the organization. The main event for the organization to actively recruit the general student body will be with a booth at the Organizational Students Fair in August before the school year.

To specify disciplinary actions taken on members, it is important to note that only documented members can actively seek such disciplinary actions at a consensual level. A *documented member* is a member who meets the following criteria:

1. A member who has signed the e-mail list and is on the membership directory
2. A member who attends at least 75% of all meetings, events, and activities the organization is involved in

Removal of one's membership can commence if, in writing, 75% of the documented members of the organization feel a member and/or anyone on the executive board violates any of the following:

1. Unilaterally act on behalf of the organization using views or objectives that are detrimental to the members or Executive board
2. Makes clear favoritism to a specific view in the region and shows belligerent unwillingness to address other views

A member can be reinstated if the following two conditions are strictly followed:

1. A written apology is presented publicly to the Executive board and documented members at an organizational meeting.
2. Gives clear assurances that the episode leading to expulsion will not occur again and strictly follows a "one strike, your out" policy, i.e. if another episode leads to expulsion once again, the member will be permanently expelled from all organizational meetings, activities, and events.

This organization will have the following electoral body. All officials will be up for elections will be up for elections at the last meeting in the spring semester. In order to make this a successful organization, members of the organization are encouraged to nominate members from Arab, Jewish, and Muslim student groups to serve as outside advisors to the Executive Board to ensure functions and events are well-received. The elections for such positions will also be at the last meeting in the Spring term.

Officers

The following officers will compose the Executive Board of *Session: Middle East*.

President

Functions

1. The President will represent the organization at university functions and events.
2. The President will approve any budgets and allocations desired by the members and written by the business manager before they are presented to the Allocations Committee of the Student Government Board (SGB) at the university.
3. The President will spearhead and run meetings and events under an agenda approved by the Executive Board.

Requirements

1. The President must be a documented member and have and continue to adhere to membership requirements and procedures
2. The President must be in attendance and direct all meetings during their presidency. The only exceptions are:
 - a. Exigent and urgent circumstances prevent his or her attendance and the Executive Board is duly noted of the circumstance

- b. The President must represent the organization at a conflicting SGB or university function
3. The President must be nominated by at least two members with differing viewpoints in the region.

Vice-President

Functions

1. The Vice-President will represent the organization at university functions and events with the President when requested or when the President cannot attend the function.
2. The Vice-President will approve any budgets and allocations desired by the members and written by the business manager before they are presented to the Allocations Committee of the Student Government Board (SGB) at the university with the President when requested or when the President cannot attend the function.
3. The Vice-President will spearhead and run meetings and events under an agenda approved by the Executive Board when the President requests it or when the President cannot attend the function.

Requirements

1. The Vice-President must be a documented member and have and continue to adhere to membership requirements and procedures
2. The Vice-President must be in attendance at all meetings during their tenure. The only exceptions are:
 - a. Exigent and urgent circumstances prevent his or her attendance and the Executive Board is duly noted of the circumstance
 - b. The Vice-President must represent the organization at a conflicting SGB or university function
3. The Vice-President must be nominated by at least two members with differing viewpoints in the region.

Business Manager

Functions

1. Writes annual budget and all supplemental budget and allocation requests and justify those requests with the President at SGB Allocations Committee meetings.
2. Balance the finances of the organization.
3. Tabulate carefully all expenditures

Requirements

1. The Business Manager must be a documented member and have and continue to adhere to membership requirements and procedures
2. The Business Manager must be in attendance at all meetings during their tenure. The only exceptions are:
 - a. Exigent and urgent circumstances prevent his or her attendance and the Executive Board is duly noted of the circumstance

- b. The Business Manager must represent the organization at a conflicting SGB or university function
3. The Business Manager must be nominated by at least two members with differing viewpoints in the region.

Secretary General

Functions

1. Organize the yearly *Session: Middle East* forum.
2. Inform the Executive Board of the forum's preparation progress and needs.
3. Write proposals for university, foundational, government funding, with aid as needed from the Business Manager
4. Recommends conferences to other officers
5. Write an end-of-year report on the forum including the mission of the annual forum, the preliminary letter of invitation and results, and the survey results of the forum to determine what are the forum's successes and needed areas of improvement. This will be done in two ways.
 - a. A written manuscript
 - b. A Power Point presentation given to the organization's Executive Board and members at a meeting following the conference.

Requirements

1. The Secretary General must be a documented member and have and continue to adhere to membership requirements and procedures.
2. The Secretary General must be nominated by at least two members with differing viewpoints in the region.
3. The Secretary General must display a reasonable background in the Middle East either through familial background, research, course work, or demonstrates motivation in actively studying the region.

Because of the nature of this organization and its desire to be an impartial conduit to all student groups with affiliations or vested interests in the Middle East, an advisory committee to the Executive Board is summoned when necessary.

Session: Middle East Staff of Faculty Advisor

Functions

1. Serves as an additional liaison and conduit between the student organization and the University Center of International Studies (UCIS) and the University Honors College
2. Advice Executive Board on the feasibility, logistics, and cooperation necessary for any agenda or approach approved by the Board.

Requirements

1. Has model conference, research, or academic experience in the Middle East or in international relations
2. Staff or faculty affiliated with both the University Honors College and the University Center for International Studies

Liaison from Israeli student groups

Functions

1. Informs Israeli student groups of agendas approved by *Session: Middle East Executive Board*.
2. As necessary, provides input and advice to the Executive Board from the perspective of Israeli groups in order to ensure positive cooperation amongst active Israeli student group members.

Requirements

1. Must serve as a committee chair or on the executive board of one of the Israeli student groups.
2. Nominated by an Israeli student group, in writing, to represent Israeli student groups at *Session: Middle East Executive Board* meetings.

Liaison from Arab student groups

Functions

1. Informs Arab and Muslim student groups of agendas approved by *Session: Middle East Executive Board*.
2. As necessary, provides input and advice to the Executive Board from the perspective of Arab and Muslim groups in order to ensure positive cooperation amongst active Arab and Muslim student group members.

Requirements

1. Must serve as a committee chair or on the executive board of one of the Arab or Muslim student groups.
2. Nominated by an Arab or a Muslim student group, in writing, to represent Israeli student groups at *Session: Middle East Executive Board* meetings.

Election of Officers

Terms for Elections

1. Because the disconnect that would occur if officials are elected in the Fall Term, with the annual forum taking place annually in the Spring, elections for all officials will occur at the last meeting of the Spring term.
2. The faculty or staff advisor will be a permanent position. In the event the advisor is on sabbatical or transfers, a new advisor will be chosen from recommendations from within the Executive Board and must be approved unanimously by the Board and 75% of all documented members.
3. Due to the fact that the most important function of this organization is the annual conference, advisors representing student groups will also be elected in the Spring term to avoid any disconnect.

Eligibility (Including Requirements mentioned in the Officers Section)

1. For President, this person must have been on the Executive Board previously to ensure that there is no disconnects from past years and the initial missions and motivations of the group. The President must also be a documented member.
2. For the Secretary General, Business Manager, Vice-President, and advisors from student groups must be documented members.
3. As this is the first year for this organization, these requirements will be waived for the first year of the organization's existence.

Nomination Procedure (Including Requirements in the Officers Section)

1. President, Vice-President, Business Manager, and Secretary General must be nominated, in writing, by two documented members of differing views, a week before elections take place at the final fall meeting.
2. Advisors representing student groups must be nominated by an Executive Board, in writing, from either an Israeli student group or an Arab student group, whichever groups they seek to represent, to ensure the credibility of the position to the student community they seek to represent.

Election Process

1. The elections for all officers and advisors representing student groups will take place the week after the annual *Session: Middle East* intercollegiate forum in April, following the final address summarizing the year's forum made by the Secretary General.
2. Each position is elected by a simple majority of all the votes cast by documented members in attendance at this meeting (you must be a documented member at least two months before this meeting to participate in the elections).
3. Votes are tabulated ONLY by the faculty or staff advisor.
4. No officer can hold more than one position.
5. No absentee votes can be cast.

Terms of Office

For all officials and advisors representing student groups, the terms of office run from Spring to Spring.

Removal of Officers

This is stipulated in the Membership Procedures section of the Founding Constitution.

Voting Powers of Officers

All officers have voting rights. The only exceptions are the advisors representing student groups who vote only when it is chosen in an agenda, event, activity, or allocations request to ask for the involvement of a student group the advisor represents.

Vacancies

Vacancies are filled through a two-tier process. Documented members will be nominated, via writing, a least a week before the elections take place. The nominees

must then be approved by a simply majority of votes cast by the documented members in attendance at that meeting where the elections are held. The person will fill the vacancy for the remainder of the current term of office for that board member.

Committees

When the need arises, the Executive Board will consider any committees proposed by documented members. The chairs for each of these committees must be unanimously approved, including by the advisors representing the student groups, and they will report to the Executive Board weekly on their progress. When it is decided by the Executive Board that the committee is no longer necessary, it must be terminated, again with unanimous approval.

Meetings

The President will commence a weekly meeting and any other necessary meetings during his or her term. Any board member or documented member seeking to have a meeting must inform the President for approval. There will be two parts to each meeting. First, the Executive Board will address the student organization as a whole. Second, the Executive Board will privately entertain any considerations of any documented members made during the first part of the meeting and conduct any other necessary business. *Roberts Rules of Order*, which includes Quorum requirements, will be used to conduct business and voting procedures as necessary during the second part of these meetings.

Finances

Budget policies and procedures are clearly defined under the Officers section of the Founding Constitution. The President will have final authority on how money is spent and defined for allocation requests.

Advisor

The Advisor's role and functions are clearly defined in the Officers section of the Founding Constitution. The advisor will only cast votes in the event of a tie in the Executive Board regarding business that does not have to be unanimously approved.

By-Laws

There are no by-laws.

External Affiliations

Session: Middle East is affiliated with the Model United Nations club. This affiliation stresses our impartiality with our objectives, so no views or students are ostracized or isolated from the openness this organization actively pursues.

Amendments

Any proposed by-laws or amendments added to the Founding Constitution must be submitted by the Executive Board, after 75% of the board approves it, in writing, to all documented members. This must take place two weeks before they are to be approved in a general organizational meeting. At that meeting, 75% of all votes casts

by documented members in attendance must approve of the amendments or by-laws proposed by the Executive Board.